

SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION 563

By Tracy

A RESOLUTION to honor and recognize Bradley Academy
Museum and Cultural Center on the twentieth
anniversary of its restoration.

WHEREAS, this General Assembly takes great pleasure in paying tribute to an iconic structure that tells the fascinating story of the history of African-American education in our State; and

WHEREAS, Bradley Academy was built in 1806 as a school for the education of white males only, including James K. Polk, the eleventh President of the United States; and

WHEREAS, in 1884, Bradley Academy became the first school in the area designated for African-American students, with both males and females being allowed to attend the school; and

WHEREAS, the current Bradley Academy structure was built in 1917; and

WHEREAS, Bradley Academy closed as an all-black school in 1955 in the wake of the *Brown v. Board of Education* decision and, after being used for office space and storage for a time, fell into disrepair and faced demolition; and

WHEREAS, Willie McGowan, known as the “Father of the Bradley Academy Historical Association,” spearheaded a movement of former students, teachers, and community supporters to restore the abandoned building by the mid-1990s; and

WHEREAS, today, Bradley Academy Museum and Cultural Center houses an original classroom, Civil War exhibit, and an exhibit focused on the early settlers of the City of Murfreesboro and the County of Rutherford; and

WHEREAS, this legendary landmark has an auditorium, which serves as a dining area; a theater section for musical programs and plays that seats 150-175 people; and a boardroom for meetings, which seats at least forty to fifty people; and

WHEREAS, with a theme of “Honoring the Legacy of Our Unsung Heroes,” this year’s Willie McGowan Banquet celebrates honorees whose efforts were critical in the successful movement to preserve and restore a building that embodies the foundation of education for African Americans in the City of Murfreesboro and Rutherford County; and

WHEREAS, this year’s honorees include the Rebecca Carney Temple No. 798 and E.A. Davis Elks Lodge No. 1138, the Middle Tennessee State University (MTSU) Center for Historic Preservation, the MTSU Department of History, Shacklett Photography, and the Christy Houston Foundation; and

WHEREAS, Bradley Academy is now operated by the Murfreesboro Parks and Recreation Department, and this recent partnership with the City of Murfreesboro will ensure that Bradley Academy’s legacy will continue for many years to come; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE ONE HUNDRED NINTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES CONCURRING, that we honor and recognize Bradley Academy Museum and Cultural Center on the twentieth anniversary of its restoration, reflecting on its important role in the education of African Americans and its historical legacy.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that an appropriate copy of this resolution be prepared for presentation with this final clause omitted from such copy.